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AMERICAN ART NEWS

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JAPANESE PRACTICALITY

It will come as a shock to readers of THE AMERICAN ART NEWS to learn, through the interview with Kojiro Matsukata, printed on another page, of the cold-blooded practical viewpoint with which he has set about forming the collection of Occidental art for the great museum he is to build at Tokio. It is his purpose, as he very frankly states, to put before his people, through the medium of his museum, the opportunity to study Western psychology and Western methods to the end that the Japanese may adapt their products to the needs of the Western world, whether those products be in the fields of art, the crafts, or merely manufactured goods.

The importance Mr. Matsukata places on pictorial and plastic art may be gathered from his statement that, "Art is the only enduring thing." From the viewpoint of materialism he is on very sound ground in holding this opinion; for no one will deny the importance of art in the Western world, historically and ethically. And for the understanding of the growth of Western civilization there are few of our historic records so illuminating as our art in all its manifestations.

But to art lovers, who look upon paintings, sculptures and medallion art as something sacred, Mr. Matsukata's plan has a touch of the profane. It is well known that the Japanese are very shrewd in absorbing Western ideas and adapting them to the world's needs. It will be the supreme test of this element in their national character to note how it reacts to Western art when presented to them in so stupendous a collection, and of what profit the Japanese will take from it in competition with the descendants of its creators.

MUSEUMS AS LABORATORIES

The active part which our American museums play in our daily lives comes to mind especially at this time with the opening of the sixth annual exhibition of industrial art at the Metropolitan. This particular phase of museum activity affects our lives so closely that too much credit cannot be given to the department in charge of it.

If anyone thinks of a museum as a kind of mausoleum devoted to dead art, beautiful perhaps, but without significance except to artists and students, let him consider the everyday things in whose making it contributes a vital element—design. It is as a laboratory of research and experiment that a museum opens its doors to the producers of industrial art.

It has real significance for us that the chairs and tables and beds that are made "up state" and along the East River should be beautiful, for it contributes that much more enjoyment to our lives. This does not mean a slavish imitation of the different styles of period furniture of the past, but it does mean a close study of them with an adaptation to our needs of today. The same thing is true of rugs, textiles, pottery,

china, jewelry, lamps and countless articles of daily use, which form the subject matter of the exhibition at the Metropolitan.

This museum has played the rôle of fairy-godmother to the industrial arts, and has not only encouraged and guided the manufacturer but has gone a step further and educated the public to an appreciation of good things. It has played a unique part by helping to create both supply and demand.

SMUDGY MONUMENTS

In response to editorial criticisms in the New York Herald regarding certain public monuments in the city which were either in need of repair or badly discolored, Gustave J. Steinacher, chief engineer of the Department of Parks, has written a letter to that paper, in the course of which he refers to attempts being made to clean these monuments, particularly their sculptural elements. Mr. Steinacher specifically states that as nothing but acid would remove the discoloration of the marble figure of the Columbus monument in Columbus Circle, and as the use of acid would have a disastrous effect on the marble, these stains cannot be removed. He also states that the Verdi monument, at Broadway and Seventy-second street, is undergoing renovation and weather proofing.

The element of color in works of sculpture placed out of doors is seriously disturbed and falsified by the soot-laden atmosphere of New York. An observation of the line of marble figures on the Customs House will show plainly how the original color of the sculptures has been completely spoiled by black smuts. And the St. Gaudens bronze equestrian figure of Sherman at the entrance to Central Park is another striking illustration of the distortion of the sculptor's work from the viewpoint of its color. The only public monuments in which sculpture is introduced in this city that escape this blight of black smut are those of bronze with a low-toned brown patina.

It would appear that the problem arising from the discoloration of outdoor city sculptures is one for the sculptors themselves to solve.

Obituary

CHARLES OBACH.

Charles Obach, formerly a well-known art dealer, is dead at Streatham, England. He was the son of Kaspar Obach, Swiss landscape painter, who settled in Stuttgart, Germany, where Charles Obach was born in 1841.

When quite young he entered the employ of the house of Goupil & Co., Paris and in the early '60s he went to London for the same firm. In 1884 he started in business on his own account in Cockspur Street, Pall Mall, with H. Velten as partner. Mr. Obach retired from the firm in 1900, G. Mayer taking his place; in 1911 the firm of Obach & Co. was absorbed into that of Colnaghi's, becoming Colnaghi & Obach. One of his daughters married O. Gutekunst, the present senior partner in the firm of Colnaghi & Obach.

Mr. Obach was one of the earliest London dealers to specialize in the works of the Barbizon and modern Dutch schools, and he helped to form the famous collections of Sir John Day, Alexander Young, J. Staats Forbes and G. R. Burnett, all of which have now been dispersed by auction and otherwise at prices many times those originally paid to Mr. Obach.

EMILE CARTAILHAC.

Emile Cartailhac, director of the Musée St. Raymond at Toulouse, is dead. He was a recognized authority on pre-historic art and was co-author of a book on the cave paintings of Altamira.

HENRI GENET.

Henri Genet, who was the art critic of the *Chronique des Arts* for several years, died recently in France.

LOUIS GONSE.

Louis Gonse, former editor of the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, is dead in Paris. He was an authority on Gothic and Japanese art.

Frescoes in the Escorial in Danger of Being Ruined by Restorers

MADRID—Francisco Pompey in the *Gaceta de Bellas Artes*, writes with deep concern of the peril threatening the mural paintings in the great library at the Escorial. It is not the hand of time but the hand of man that menaces their safety, it seems. Some restorers, indulging in the egoistic pastime of "interpreting" the old masters, are going over some of the figures in perfect ignorance of the craft of fresco painting, and are working with the most unfortunate zest, and assiduity. Sooner or later, it is felt, the works of Pantoja de la Cruz, of Juan Carreno de Miranda, of Peregrin Tibaldi and Bartolomé Carducci and others of equal merit among the masters of the past will fall victim to their zeal unless a cry for help is promptly raised and answered.

CURRENT EXHIBITS IN NEW YORK GALLERIES

(Continued from page 1)

and emphasizes the strength of their plodding figures.

"Vermont Farmstead" by Chauncey Ryder is rich in atmospheric quality. It shows faint purple hills back of the low white buildings which dominate a desolate stretch of brown pasture. "Moonlight" by John Noble is in pale blue tones with the occasional white of buildings edging a ridge, and nestling at its base providing a pattern of decorative originality.

Hobart Nichols has depicted three Italian fishing boats in a row with prows repeated in the smooth water. George Elmer Browne's "Duneland" presents a sweep of blue sky with tossing white clouds over a stretch of gold and green. E. Irving Couse, Charles S. Chapman, Charles W. Hawthorne, Spencer B. Nichols and Karl Anderson are also represented.

Toulouse-Lautrec at French Museum

The varied works of Toulouse-Lautrec form the subject matter of the fifth official loan exhibition of French Art at the Museum of French Art, 599 Fifth Avenue, until February 11. A few paintings, a number of lithographs and some drawings, posters and illustrations for books give a comprehensive review of the many fields in which this versatile artist was proficient. "La Femme au Chien," an oil, and also "Woman Seated in a Garden" are character delineations of a high order, but it was as a master of trenchant line in lithographs and drawings that he made his most significant contribution in recording the Paris of his time.

His portraits of actors and actresses include those of Bernhardt, Coquelin, Lucien Guitry and a series of eight of Yvette Guilbert to illustrate the book by Arthur Byl. Fac-simile drawings in color, "Au Cirque," are especially interesting for their powerfully drawn horses. The eleven lithographs which Toulouse-Lautrec contributed to "Le Café Concert" by Montorgueil include sketches of Jane Avril, Paula Brébion and Aristide Bruant.

Exaggeration of eccentricity without undue emphasis of the grotesque, which is evident in all of his characterizations, lent itself readily to the making of posters, of which six typical examples are shown. The eleven illustrations for "Au Pied du Sinai" by Clémenceau, "L'Etoile Rouge" by Paul Leclercq, and several which he contributed to "Le Rire" have diversity of interest.

Philipp's Portraits at Sterner's

The "Portraits of Celebrities" by John Philipp, shown at Mrs. Sterner's Gallery, 22 West 49th Street, until January 31, have a double interest in combining the work of an artist of ability with subjects of unusual distinction. There is a living quality in his interpretation of personality that would give as much artistic value to his characterization of a beggar as of a prince, but since he has had the honor of painting so many persons of renown it is our good fortune to see them portrayed by a real artist.

Auguste Rodin is shown in profile with head very erect, arms folded, and the long beard touched with a light which brings out its silvery quality. The strength of the presentation arises from the vigorous modeling which does justice to every line and contour without the slightest exaggeration. The portrait of Pope Benedict XV gives the impression of a yirile personality and emphasizes the steady eyes and strong mouth. Philipp's portrayal of Arthur Nikisch is typical of the extent to which he delves deep into the character of his sitter and gives a well rounded expression of his personality. The keenness, alertness, and intensity of the energetic figure who stands with arms crossed and head inclined slightly forward evince the almost psychic understanding which is the requisite of the portrait painter.

Bernath's Water Colors at Malcom's

Sandor Bernath, a young water colorist who has exhibited for several years in the Pennsylvania Academy and with the New York Water Color Club, is having his first "one man show" at Mrs. Malcom's Gallery, 114 East 66th Street, until January 25. His presentation of certain New York subjects are distinguished by purity of tone, such as the blue depth of dusk in "Twilight," with a composition of special interest in the vista of curving tracks viewed from a hill. The ethereal sweep of Brooklyn Bridge in violet shadow against a hazy sky is handled with simplicity and vigor. "Harbor Dredges" is one of the most powerful pictures in its massing of light and dark, with the black forms of the boats merging almost imperceptibly into their reflection in the water, and in the background a vivid glow of sunset. The mist over East River, intensified here and there in a streak of smoke, is a subject which he handles with especial ease.

Not all of the subjects are of New York, however. A marine, the "Coast of Normandy," has all the motion of the surging flow of the sea over great rocks, and is beautiful for its blue-green intensity. Several landscapes of charming color would seem to argue that Mr. Bernath looks at nature primarily through the eyes of a decorator.

Marco Zim's Versatility Shown

Paintings, sculpture and etchings by Marco Zim are shown at The Bookery, 14 West 47th Street, until January 31. The paintings include a number of California landscapes of especial decorative interest. "Lake Tahoe" is rich in

the deep blue of the lake and "Wonderland" the ruddy gold of sunset, with a towering peak and the strongly delineated tree which cling to the mountain side bathed in the warm glow. "Shimmering Lights" takes the dawn as its subject and shows the rising gray mists of the Pacific back of the tall trees that line the shore. Among the sculpture is "Portrait of Mr. Father" which won the silver medal at the San Francisco Exposition, and a subtly modeled "Hero and Leander" showing Hero, having discovered her lover's body, about to throw herself into the sea.

Ryden Portraits at Babcock's

Ten portraits by Henning Ryden at the Babcock Galleries, show the variety of his viewpoint and his color appreciation, for they range from the low-toned full-length figure of "Mrs. T." to the high notes seen in the portrait of "Mrs. T." whose blonde type is accentuated by the contrast of the blue gown and black fur wrap she wears. The seated portrait of "Mrs. Maida Castalhun Darnton" is Mr. Ryden's finest achievement in that he has caught to the full the character of his subject.

There are also portraits of Mrs. Gladys Nelson, the Misses Katherine and Harriet Tate, Miss Margaret Ann Glaenzer and Master Hugh Gordon. Although "A Sophomore of 1921" is undoubtedly a portrait it must fall, through its anonymity, among his figure studies along with "Sun and Shade." By way of variety the artist has added to his portraits three landscapes painted at New Hope last summer. These include the sunny "Mountain Cabin," colorful view, "Across the River," and "The Manor House."

Sturges and Rickman at Ackermann's

Dwight C. Sturges, an American etcher whose home is in Boston, and who has not exhibited often in New York, contributes both etchings and lithographs to a very interesting exhibition at the Ackermann Galleries, lasting until February 28. In conjunction with these water color drawings of game birds by Philip Rickman are shown.

Most of Mr. Sturges' plates are bitten etchings, with only an occasional use of dry-point. There is nothing exaggerated or forced about his work. His many portraits of children are sincere and straightforward, his particularly fine lithograph of two old New England sals discussing the incoming schooner has a strong narrative interest, and his "Old French Cellist" is rich in the qualities of real portraiture. Perhaps the gem of the collection is "The Little Violinist," a boy whose absorption in his occupation shows no trace of pose.

Philip Rickman's ability to paint a landscape is a valuable adjunct to his consummate skill in portraying game birds. "Edge of the Coverts in Spring" is one of the most beautiful in which a group of pheasants, their plumage portrayed with almost unbelievable accuracy in drawing and color, stand at the edge of a wood against a background that repeats the coloring of their own red-gold plumage. Two black ducks dropping down to the water with their shadows faintly repeating their forms are treated with all the simplicity and decorative feeling of the Japanese. The rich coloring of the pheasant in full flight is a typical subject.

Zorn Etchings at Kennedy's

The sixty-six prints by Anders Zorn on view at Kennedy's through January are chiefly representative mainly of his latest work, particularly in the nudes. In this division are shown the "Cabin," "Sappo," "A Dark Corner," "Mina Modellar" and the ever lovely "Three Sisters" and "The Swan." The portraits include those of John Hay, St. Gaudens, Betty Nansen, August Strindberg, Olga Bratt, the Crown Princess Margaret of Sweden, Major von Heijne, the immortal seated figure of Renan and two of Zorn's self-portraits.

There are also a group of studies of heads including the "Mona" and "Gulli No. 2" and that most superb plate, souvenir of an earlier Paris day, the "Omnibus."

Franklin Souvenirs at Bonaventure's

In honor of Benjamin Franklin's birthday and as a contribution to the Thrift Week movement in New York City, the Bonaventure Gallery, 536 Madison Avenue, has arranged a group of art objects and other memorabilia associated with Franklin's life. Chief among the works displayed is a portrait bust in oil in the manner of Duplessis, a vivid piece of portraiture worthy of that painter's name. There is a group of Wedgewood medallion portraits, a French watch of the period of Franklin's stay in France with his portrait in enamel on its face, and a framed group of engraved portraits.

A terra cotta bust by Houdon and a statuette in bronze after the same French sculptor and a Sèvres bust made in the Sèvres manufactory, some Colonial currency printed by the Franklin press in Philadelphia and a colored engraved portrait framed with an autograph letter and a medallion are other features of this engaging exhibition.

Two-Man Show at Whitney Studio Club

Max Kuehne and William J. Glackens are showing thirty-two canvases at the Whitney Studio Club through January, their work harmonizing well, for they are both colorists devoted to a light-toned palette. Kuehne's pictures were painted in Spain and New England and he found the same color in both countries as may be noted in the impressive "Puerto San Martin, Toledo," and in the "Village"

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